



surprising signs that you may be developing diabetes

Excessive thirst or hunger or frequent urination are the well-knowns, but here are some not-as-apparent clues that you may be on the road to developing the disease and should talk to your health care provider ASAP:

- Recurrent vaginal yeast infections
- Tingling in the extremities
- Blurred vision
- Gum infections
- Fatigue
- Trouble concentrating
- Poor wound healing
- Unexplained weight loss

palm; of rice and pasta, about the size of a baseball; of oils and butter, about the tip of your thumb.

Eat “real” food Load up on what you find in nature: fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, whole grains, lean protein and lowfat dairy products. One study showed that for every additional two servings of whole grains women ate a day, their risk of developing type 2 diabetes went down 21%. Other research has found that middle-age women who ate the most dairy also had a 21% lower risk of developing diabetes than those who ate the least.

Don't drink your calories The sugar from juice and soda is so concentrated that it enters your bloodstream immediately and your body has to produce a quick burst of insulin to deal with it, explains Dr. Kaufman. If you prompt your body to do this frequently, it can lead to weight gain and increase your risk of becoming insulin-resistant (your body will start to need extra

patty

“my hairdresser saw the warning signs”

Patty Kidd, 45, mother of two, Grand Rapids, Michigan



Two years ago, when the texture of my hair changed and patches starting falling out, I mostly worried about how I was going to look. But my hairstylist, Synia Jordan, made me realize that my health could be in danger.

I had been seeing Synia for nearly seven years, and we always talked about a lot more than my hair. I told her that I had been diagnosed with diabetes in 1990, but that it was “only” type 2 and I was taking medications that would keep me healthy. I wasn't on insulin, and my kidneys weren't showing any signs of problems, so I didn't think it was a big deal. But when I started filling out a survey from Synia's program, I got nervous. (She had recently joined the National Kidney Foundation's Healthy Hair Starts with a Healthy Body program, which trains stylists to talk to clients about their risks of diabetes, high blood pressure and kidney disease.) I was doing everything wrong, from not eating as many vegetables as I should to not exercising enough. I also weighed about 190 pounds, and I'm only 5'3”.

What really scared me the most was talking to Synia about her mom, who was on dialysis. Around the same time, a friend who was a diabetic learned that she needed a kidney transplant. That's when I realized that I *wasn't* OK, and that I needed to make some major changes to prevent these kinds of problems. In the past, I had promised my doctor I would diet and exercise, but it was always so hard and I gave up quickly. This time, I joined a diabetic education program and, with their support, finally stuck it out. Now I'm down to 147 pounds and my doctor has even lowered my dose of medication. ►

as told to Cheryl Platzman Weinstock